will create serious problems for railways; and

(d) if not, the estimated catering burden railways will bear as addition to operating cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) On review, no fresh contracts for beautification/maintenance of railway stations in lieu of sole advertising rights, cleanliness of stations and its premieses and supply of bed rolls by the private parties are being awarded and the existing contracts are also not renewed.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Inquiry into Funds Disbursement for Latur Victims

253. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRI SHUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report in the "Statesman" of September 29, 1996, captioned "Money for Latur Victims siphoned off";

(b) if so, whether Government have set-up an inquiry into the circumstances how the funds have been siphoned off and to what destination, while leaving the victims of Latur quake high and dry;

(c) if so, with what results; and

(d) the steps since taken to ensure proper rehabilitation of the victims?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The report which appeared in the "Statesman" of September 30, 1996, (News dated 29th September, 1996) is not factually correct. The State Government has, therefore, not considered it necessary to set up an inquiry into the matter.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Maharashtra Emergency Earthquake Rehabilitation Programme (MEERP) is being implemented in a phased manner, with well established procedures for reporting, monitoring and accounting. The programme is reviewed at the highest levels in the State Government periodically. The World Bank Teams also regularly assess the progress of the Programme and utilisation of its credit.

Opening of Central University in Delhi

254. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have agreed to open another Central University in the Capital as the present University of Delhi is unable to meet the demand of admissions of students;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating whether clearance and required financial assistance have been given by UGC; and

(c) whether Government have received similar demands for setting-up of Central Universities from other States, if so, whether any decision has been taken in this regard so far and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No such proposal has been received from any State Government. Moreover, in view of the directives of the National Policy on Education-1986, as amended in 1992, the Central Government does not encourage setting

up of more Central Universities.

Environmental Impact Assessment

255. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether environmental impact assessment is mandatory for all power projects costing over Rs. 50 crores;

(b) whether environmental clearance would not be necessary for power projects upto Rs. 1000 crores in view of recent announcement by the Prime Minister; and

(c) the measures proposed to ensure environmental protection by all such power projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Modalities for delegation of powers to State Governments for according environmental clearance to power projects are under finalisation.

Protection of Fishermen in Orissa

256. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether scores of lives of fishermen and fishing boats were lost in recent cyclonic storm into the Orissa waters;

(b) whether Government propose to set-up three relay stations of AIR at Sompeta. Kakinada and Nellore to cover the shadow regions beyond orissa and Andhra Pradesh border to apprise fishermen of weather bulletins in time; and

(c) the other steps proposed to protect the local fishermen from impending dangers of cyclone in coastal areas?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) No. Sir.

(b) The coastal areas of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh including Sompeta, Kakinada and Nellore fall within the coverage zone of the High Power Transmitters at Cuttack, Vijayawada and Vishakhapatnam and FM Transmitters at Puri and Behrampur.

(c) Cyclone warning dissemination system has been set up in the coastal areas for relaying regular weather bulletins for the benefit of the vulnerable people including fishermen.

Subsidies of Fertilizers

257. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that cash subsidies on fertilizers which have added heavily to the fiscal deficit have adversely affected the fertility of land and environmentalists are very much concerned about it;

(b) whether it is a fact that the subsidies do not benefit the poor farmers but only the big landlords;

(c) if so, the remedial steps so far taken to ensure that the benefit reaches the poor farmers; and

(d) whether there is a proposal to phase out the subsidies over a period and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) No, Sir. there is no evidence to suggest that use of chemical fertilizers destroys soil fertility. Results of long-term experiments have shown that gains in crop productivity due to use of chemical fertilizers can be sustained if the health of soil resource base is maintained through use of organics. The need, therefore, is for balanced use of chemical fertilizers with integrated use of organics.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) There is, at present, no such proposal.